Mr. Biehn’s Student Teaching Week Four Journal

Cooperating teacher: Mr. Brenner

Supervisor: Dr. Dammers

Day one, April 12th

Today was the first day back from Spring Break. I found out that one of my Piano class students was suspended from school and was going to miss 10 days of school. We had to figure out a way to keep her up to date with the material in school even though she did not have a piano to practice at home. She could at least hear the piano parts being played to her and pretend to play the fingering on a piano sheet that had the basic 2 ½ octaves that she needed. She had part of her suspension before Spring Break and now has approximately 4 days left, so I will see her Friday, which is just in time for our playing test. Supposedly she got into a brutal fight with another girl student during school in the staircase where she supposedly pushed the girl down the stairs, but it was a fight that went both ways. The other girl was suspended just as much. I give her credit for doing right before Spring Break, if there was a time to do it. She got 10 days plus the 10 days from Spring Break, so 20 days off is not bad. Her name remains confidential, but she was really nice in class and is very sweet but I guess things can happen to even the best of us. I know the feeling because I have been there many times in my childhood. I had to learn many different ways to walk away from potential danger even if it still caused pain to do so.

Day two, April 13th

Today, there was a fight that broke out during my Homeroom assistance. When we were standing in the HR, we heard loud cheering and then huge bangs from the lockers, and there was a massive fight in the hallway and we just tried to keep everyone in the HR and not get involved or escalate the fight with more students. It finally subsided and 4 students were sent down to the office for suspensions. Others were injured just because they got caught in the crossfire. On a positive note, we started the new lesson with Piano and started to work on getting the C Major chord and the G7 chord with melodic melody in the other hand and vice versa. They understood what I was going over and most of them could play through the pieces with the melody within this first day. Hopefully by tomorrow they will start to feel confident enough to put the other hand with the melody but with chords this time.

Day three, April 14th

Today, we had another meeting, but this time the teachers seemed to be more at ease with the rifting going on. There were still a massive amount of emails going back and forth and much gossip about who was rifted and who was bumped, but those who knew, were starting to think about what they need to do for the next year. Speaking of the next year, the meeting was about their professional growth over the last year and what they hope to improve in the school for next year. They set out a bunch of cards that had different things like attendance, parent groups, teacher responsibilities, suspension policies, etc. and were trying to figure out which ones were most important. This was between the departments like the last meeting but we were divided into smaller groups to see if each group came up with the same primary improvements and plans to improve them. I had help sorting out the ones that were obviously not important and I picked out two of the four that were most important. One was the attendance issue that has been growing and the other was the parental involvement. Many of the parents complain about their students but are not there to help them so there needs to be a connection between teachers, students, parents, and the administrators to get things done and to set up better ways for the parents to keep tabs of how well their child is doing in school by checking online grades or having multiple one-on-one conferences by phone, email, or after school instead of waiting for the one parent-teacher conference in the middle of the semester.

Day four, April 15th

Today, the for band class I started to take more control of the class and I lead a few of the other songs that were being rehearsed. I was going over “Fantasia 2000” and the students seemed to follow what I was doing as far as tempo changes which were the main focus I wanted them to experience. They needed to feel the drive of the piece especially Beethoven’s 5th. I also told them that we were going to start the next piece tomorrow which would be B day with the freshman class that I could introduce the piece with all of the instrumentation in the band. They seemed excited that we were doing another piece because they were getting tired of “Fanfare Majestic”. I believe that they would rather perform the next piece for their spring concert rather than “Fanfare.”

Day five, April 16th

Today was the first read through “El Relicario” and they did fairly well. I focused on the beginning and the end of the piece to give them a general idea of the piece and I explained that it was a Spanish dance called a “two-step” but it was actually written in ¾ time. I would have liked it better if it was written in 6/8 to get the feeling of the 2 step but in this case it feels like a waltz march. It would have been nice to show them an actual dance using the music, but there are no videos to use. After we focused on the end and beginning we played through the piece once to get the overall feel of the piece and to have them play through things they would have to practice. I also warned them about the tempo of the piece and it is supposed to be fast, but for now, we rehearsed it quite slowly.